Extract 1

Section 1

Not many in the audience again today.

Yeah, they should put more effort into advertising. I know!

Let’s make a homepage for the orchestra. My wife is a web designer. I’ll make her do it for free.What do you think? More importantly, are you going to be fine? About what? Next, the next. Next what? You spent so much money on that, gotta start looking for the next one.

Good performance again, everyone. Good work everyone. Although the seats were empty….. I think your performance were great. Um…. Actually….. today… the owner of this orchestra, Mr. Spnezaki… has something to tell you, so please give him your attention. You’re … disbanded. See ya.

I finally became an orchestra member. But it became a past memory in a flash. This cello is innocent. Only because it was bought by a loser like me, it lost it’s job. In many ways…. This cello was too heavy for me.

Section 2

Thank you very much. Please cook it immediately. Yes, good bye. I’m home. Welcome back. She gave me an octopus, I just happened to see our neighbor. They just caught it this morning. What’s wrong? Disbanded. What is? My orchestra. I see… you just have to find the next one. There won’t be a next one. Someone with my skill level can only go so far… and there’s the debt for this cello. How much? Don’t worry, if it’s just around $10.000… I can pay it back with my job. $180.000. $1 … $180.000? pros all spend that much…. It’s relatively cheap. Why did you hide it from me? I knew you’d be against it. Why didn’t tell me… about something do important? I’m sorry. I’ll make dinner. ‘all the cities around the world are our new homes. Let’s live together on a musical tour.” Those were the words of my marriage proposal. But the reality is harsh. No, I should’ve realized the limit to my talent a lot sooner.

Section 3

Eek! What happened? This octopus is alive! You’re right. It’s alive. Hey, Dai… what should we do? Don’t get caught again. Huh? I think I’ll quit. Quit what? Cello. What will you do then? Go back to the countryside…. In Yamagata. I vote yes! Huh? You don’t mind? Well, the house your mum left you…. We don’t need to pay rent, right? But you really don’t mind? Yes. This is a wonderful instrument. I thought it was the greatest turning point of my life, but for some reason, I felt relieved the instant I let go of the cello. As I was suddenly released from being tied up. What I believed to be my dream…. was probably not real dream.

Section 4

The only thing my mother left me, when she died two years ago. I’ve been told my father ran the café at first, but I have almost no recollection of it. After he left home for another woman, my mother ran this small café, and raised me alone. Meal’s ready. Okay. I thought you would hate the countryside more. No, it’s kind of refreshing. I don’t know if it’s because of the water here, but the rice tastes better too. Really? Oh, maybe I’ll start a shop. What will you sell? This is it! This, this one! No age limit, high salary? In addition, short actual working time? As a full-time employee! ‘NK Agent”? what kind of company is that? “A job that helps out journeys.” A travel agency? Oh, maybe tour guide? It says “no experience necessary”. I’ll go ask for details. Yeah.

Section 5

This is it. Excuse me. Is this “NK Agent”? Yes. I’m Kobayashi, I called earlier. Oh, you’re here for the interview. The boss will be back soon, sit here. Yes, thank you. I was against it when the boss wanted to post the ad in the newspaper. Oh. It’s extremely hard to attract people into this industry. Um.. what does this company do? What? You came here without knowing anything? It said to help out with journeys… Uh… that’s not what you do? Boss, he is here for the interview. Nice to meet you. I’m Kobayashi. I called you this morning. Oh. It’s you. You seem more energetic than on the phone. Thank you. See? It was a good idea. Pour some tea. Ye. I brought my resume just in case. OK sit down. Thank you. Can you put in lots of hours here? Huh? Uh…. Yes. You are hired. Eh? What’s your name again? It’s Daigo Kobayashi. Order his business cards right away. Got it. W..Wait. We haven’t discussed anything….salaries, and other things…. Oh right. Let’s start with one hand. One hand? ¥50000? ¥500000. ¥500000?! Too little? Not at all, can I get that much? I don’t mind paying you in cash, daily. No, wait, what kind of work will I? Let’s see… as my assistant at first.

Section 6

Exactly what? To be exact? Encoffining. Encoffining? A job that place the corpse into the coffin. It’s starting to bloom! Corpse as in dead people? You ask funny questions, aren’t you? No, uh, um…. The job posting said helping out journeys. I assume it was a travel agency…Oh, this is a misprint. Misprint? Not “helping out journeys”, it’s ….. “ helping out peaceful departure.” Departure? So “NK” stands for “NouKan” (encoffining). Anyway it must be some kind of fate. Just give it a try. You can quit if it doesn’t suit you. This is for today. No, I can’t….. Don’t worry! No… I’m back. Welcome back. Here! Where did you get this? You said you wanted to eat sukiyaki from here, right? Yonezawa beef? The highest-grade sirloin. Wow! Was it expensive? I got paid in advance. You got the job? Kind of, yes. Great! Let’s celebrate today. Sure. So, what kind of job was it? Tour guide after all? Not really… Sales? What the matter? It wasn’t a travel agency. Oh, what was it? Ceremonial event-related…. Like a wedding hall? Yeah… they might make you play the cello again. I will make sukiyaki right away. OK. This is great. Looks tasty!

Extract 2

Section 1

What exactly am I being tested for? Is this my punishment for not seeing my mother off? What will happen to me? Strangely, thinking about it made me want to play the cello. I simply wanted to play the cello while reminiscing my past. It’s so small…

Salmons? Ah, yes. They’re right by the rocks….. over there. Oh! Go for it! It’s kind of sad… to climb only to die. Why work so hard if you’re going to die anyway? I’m sure they want to go back… to their birthplace.

Let’s go for lunch. Lunch. It’s an order from your boss. Is this a coincidence? Huh? That you happened to pass through here. It’s fate. There’s no such thing…. This is your god-giving job. Don’t be ridiculous!

Section 2

I’m sorry, sorry, I apologize. They are angry! Come on Mr. Sasaki! Sorry. You’re late. It’s 5 minutes past already! I apologize. You people make a living from the dead. Brother. Hurry up, dumb it. I sincerely apologize.

Is there a lipstick your wife liked to use? What? To revive a cold body, and grant eternal beauty. It was calm and precise. And more than anything, it was filled with affection. To be present at the last farewell, and send off the deceased. It was tranquil, and every action seemed elegant. Thank you very much. Please allow me to close the lid. Naomi…… Naomi…… Excuse me… I’m sorry about earlier today. No, it’s our fault. Please take these. Thank you. That was… the most beautiful she’s ever been. Thank you so much. It’s nothing.

Section 3

Welcome. Good evening. Good evening. Ah, don’t tell me… yes, she is my wife. Wow.! Nice to meet you. You’ve caught a pretty one! It’s not a big deal! Take your time and warm up. Yes, thank you. Good evening. Oh, hello. Do you always come here? I’ve been come here for more than 50 years. Oh! Maybe I’ve seen you before… hot bath like this are pretty nice too. They use groundwater heated by firewood. The water feels soft. That’s why it doesn’t sting even though it’s hot. I see. It’s the best bath house in Japan! Right.

Section 4

See you again, Tsuyako. Thank you, come again. Would you like me to help? It’s bad karma to get help from the customer! You do everything by yourself? Yes, my husband died a long time ago. My son who works at a government office tells me I should sell this place so they can build a condo here… but my current customers would be in a fix. As long as I’m still healthy… come on, you are still young. Give him your support. What? Dai is too kind. He keeps everything to himself. When his parents split up too… he never cried in front of his mother. He cried when he was alone in the bath. So hard his shoulders shook from crying. He’s like that sometimes. Please be understanding. Yes. How’s the water today? Hmm… so-so. Oh, shush! That’s great. It looks good on you.

Extract 3

Section 1

Mika! You haven’t been cleaning this place? Occasionally. You’re lying, you haven’t even cleaned once. I cleaned twice. Thant’s not “occasionally” you’re mess without me, as I thought. I have something to report too. What is it? I’m pregnant. Wow… I’m going to be a father? So please start getting your life together. Can you proudly tell your child about your job? I’m sure it’ll lead to bullying. I don’t care about money. Let’s just live happily together. Yes, hello? What? Now? What?? Okay. I’ll be right away. You’re going to work at a time like this? Lady at the bathhouse… passed away. She’s my wife, Mika. She collapsed while carrying firewood…. and passed away. She was working till the very end. It’ll be lonely around here, without this bathhouse. Please wipe her face one by one, and bid her farewell one last time. Mom… mother… shiori.. this is good-bye to your grandma. Mother… thank you everything.

Section 2

This is where you work?

Everyone, please see her off with a prayer. Please allow me to close the window. Thank you… see you again. Can I witness the last moment of my mother? Thank you. I guess people get a hunch about these things. Last winter, the two of us had a little Christmas party. I didn’t expect her to celebrate it at this age. But… she said she wanted to have one no matter what. We bought a small cake, lit up the candles… and celebrated together. Then, out of the blue… she asked me to help her with the firewood. This must have been what she meant. I’m good at burning things. Working here for a long time makes me think… the death…. is a gateway. Death doesn’t mean the end, but leaving the present, heading for the next stage. Truly a gateway. As a gatekeeper, I’ve seen off many people. ‘ have a nice trip, see you again’, I would say… mom… I’m sorry, mum… I’m sorry, mum… I’m sorry… mum… I’m sorry, mum…

Section 3

What are you doing? This is it! Here. What? stone-letter. In the ancient times, before humans invented writing… they searched for the stone that resembled their feelings, and gave it to another person. The person who received the stone, read the other person’s feelings by the weight and texture. For example, smooth texture symbolizing a peaceful mind, and rough texture symbolizing a concern for others. Thank you. What did you feel? It’s a secret. That’s a wonderful story. Who did you hear from? My old man. Does that mean… that big stone too? Yes, I got it from my father. I never knew. ‘ let’s give each other stone-letters every year”, he said… yet that was the only time. Such a lousy father!

Extract 4

Section 1

What a nice weather. Hello, Is this the Kobayashi residence? Yes, a telegram for Ms. Kazuko. What? is she no longer here? No, uh… my mother-in-law passed away two years ago. Really? Oh… excuse me, can I see it? You’re not supposed to… [Kobayashi Hideki. Time of death:7:30 of the 18th, please come and collect this body…] I’m back, sorry for taking so long. Daigo, you forgot to take your cell phone. What? Oh… it’s back home. Sorry. Father passed away. Whose? Yours. What do you mean?

Section 2

.. is what they tpld me when I called the Yurahara Fishing Association. Our address was in his belongings. But I don’t even know him… I haven’t seen him in more than 30 years! And the person he ran away with can take care of him. It seems he was alone the whole time. He will be cremated tomorrow morning. It seems his body is in their assembly hall. Anyway, we’re no longer legally related… tell them I can’t sign the documents. Thanks. Dai…. Please go for him. Don’t worry about it. Please, I’m begging you. I… abandoned my son in Obihiro(Hokkaido). He was 6 years old. I fell in love with someone…. “Mommy, mommy”…. He cried, but… I shook off his small arm, and left home. Your son… of course I want to see him, but I can’t. why not? Just go see him if you want to. Do parents who’ve abandoned their child act like that? Then you’re all too irresponsible! Please, go for him. Go and see his last appearance. Dai… boss, Hey, take one you like. Go ahead.

Section 3

He was already dead when I showed up this morning. I was surprised. I don’t know where he came from, but he came to this town by himself. He worked very hard at the port. So I let him live in this shack. I see… he was a quiet man… I’m glad someone from his family showed up. People from the funeral home will be here soon. Okay. He’s your father. I’m ashamed to admit…. I don’t recognize… his face. That he looked like this… it doesn’t even ring a bell. What ws this man’s life? He lived for 70 odd years… only to leave a cardboard box behind. He’s here. Thanks. Excuse us. Excuse us. Can I take him now? Let’s just toss him in. yeah. Um… yes? May I? No we can do it. Just give him a drink after we place him into the coffin. Ready… what are you doing? My husband is… an encoffiner. Father… he is my father. Father…